PREPARING YOUTH FOR TRANSITION

By Paula Saenz and the Youth Leadership Council
Pieces to the Puzzle:

- The Reality of Foster Care
- Chafee Independence
- Transition Planning
- Kentucky Resources
- The Experts.
The Reality....

• Approximately 20,000 youth “age out” of the foster-care system each year nationally.

• These are youth who, because of allegations of abuse or neglect, have been separated from their families for their protection and for whom no permanent plan was successfully implemented.
The experience of foster care itself can be **traumatizing** to youth, as they must cope with:

- Frequent moves
- Changing schools
- Normalcy Issues
- Not having Permanency
- Aging out without Permanency
Something to Think about....

- More than one fifth (4,000) of former foster youth experienced homelessness for one day or more within a year of aging out, compared to the national statistic of 1 percent per year.
- Over 50 percent of foster-care alumni have at least one mental-health diagnosis; 25 percent are diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.
• Foster-care alumni obtain a GED instead of a high-school diploma at nearly six times the rate of the general population; less than 2 percent of former foster youth complete a bachelor’s degree.

• The employment rate among alumni who are eligible to work is 80 percent, compared to the national average of 95 percent; the rate of former foster youth receiving cash aid is five times higher than the national average.
What is Chafee Independence?

- Early 90’s the late Senator John Chafee advocated to congress to increase funds given to states to assist youth transitioning into adult hood.
- In 1999, Title IV-E was amended to include the John Chafee Foster Care Independence Act.
- This act provided funding to states to assist youth in making the transition from foster care to independent living.
The Purpose

• To “provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients
• National funding for the independent living program is $140 million per year
• Kentucky 2012 Chafee Allocation, $2,282,955, 2012 ETV Allocation $761,233.00
Preparing DCBS Youth for

- **Soft Skills** (12-15)
- **Independent Living Classes (stipend)** (16-21)
- **Regional Events** (14-21)
- **Yearly Teen Conference** (16-21)
- **Transition Plan at 1st Case Plan Meeting closest to 17th Birthday.**
- **Facilitated Transition Plan with IL Coordinator.**
The SSW ensures that a **Transition Plan** is developed with input from all youth at first case planning conference at age seventeen (17).
• The SSW reviews progress toward the youth’s transition plan goals during monthly supervisory conferences.
• The independent living coordinator facilitates a transition plan meeting that must occur within ninety (90) days of a youth attaining age eighteen (18).
• Is the youth planning to participate in an extension or reinstatement of commitment for transitional living support.
• There is a 6 month grace period to recommit after aging out at age 18
Transition = Ongoing Process

- Continued guidance during case plan reviews after 18.
- Youth can request additional transition plan through their ILC or Social Worker.
Tuition Waiver

Who’s Eligible?
• DCBS and DJJ YOUTH 18-21
• Youth left care on or after 18
• Youth Adopted from State Foster Care

How’s it Work?
• Waives cost of tuition to any KY Public Post Secondary School.
• The Waiver must start no more than 4 years from the date of high school graduation
• The Waiver is good for 5 years from date of first entry into school
Education Training Voucher

- Federally funded through Chafee Independence Program
- Assists youth with any expenses directly related to a post secondary education or job training program. Youth must show financial need and submit a FAFSA to receive services.
- Up to $5,000 per youth per year
- Available to youth who aged out of CHFS custody on or after their 18th birthday or who were adopted from CHFS on or after their 16th birthday
Who’s Eligible?

• Youth currently committed to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) or Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) ages 16-21.

• Youth who have aged out of care on or after their 18th birthday up to their 23rd birthday.

• *DJJ youth are not eligible for the Education Training Voucher Program.
Room and Board Program

• Kentucky currently utilizes 30% of federal dollars.
• Program offers six months of housing assistance.
• DCBS and DJJ youth are currently eligible.
• DCBS currently contracts with the Kentucky Housing Corporation.
• KHC provides a home inspection, assists with leasing paperwork, utility deposits, and provides household start up funds.
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